

## 6202.0 - Labour Force, Australia, May 2019

Previous ISSUE Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 13/06/2019

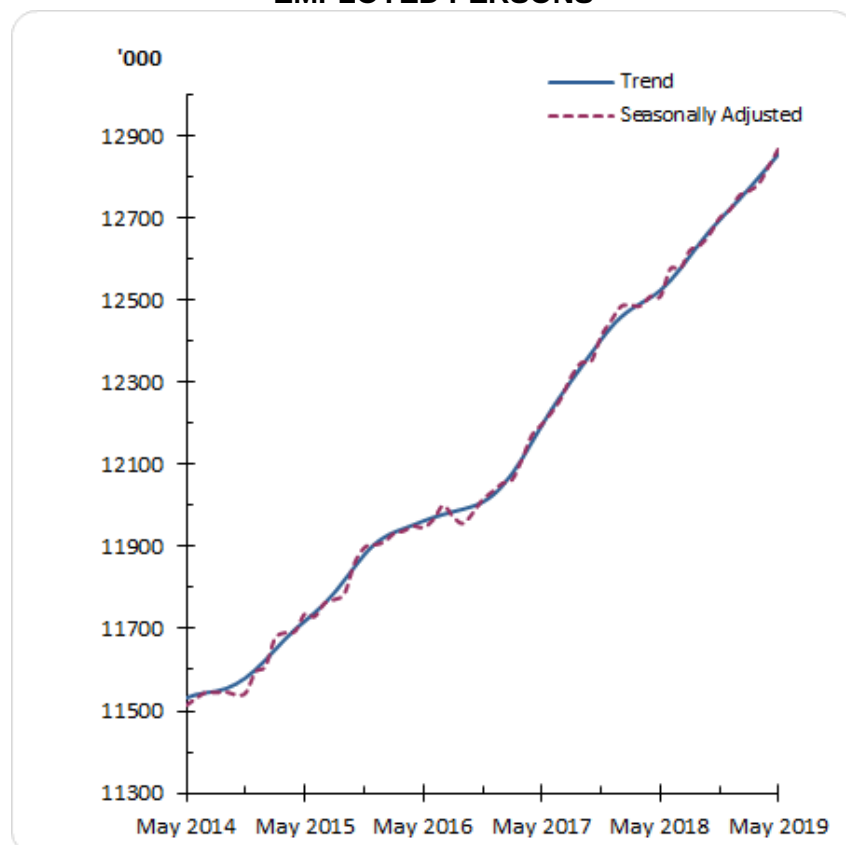
## Summary

### Main Features

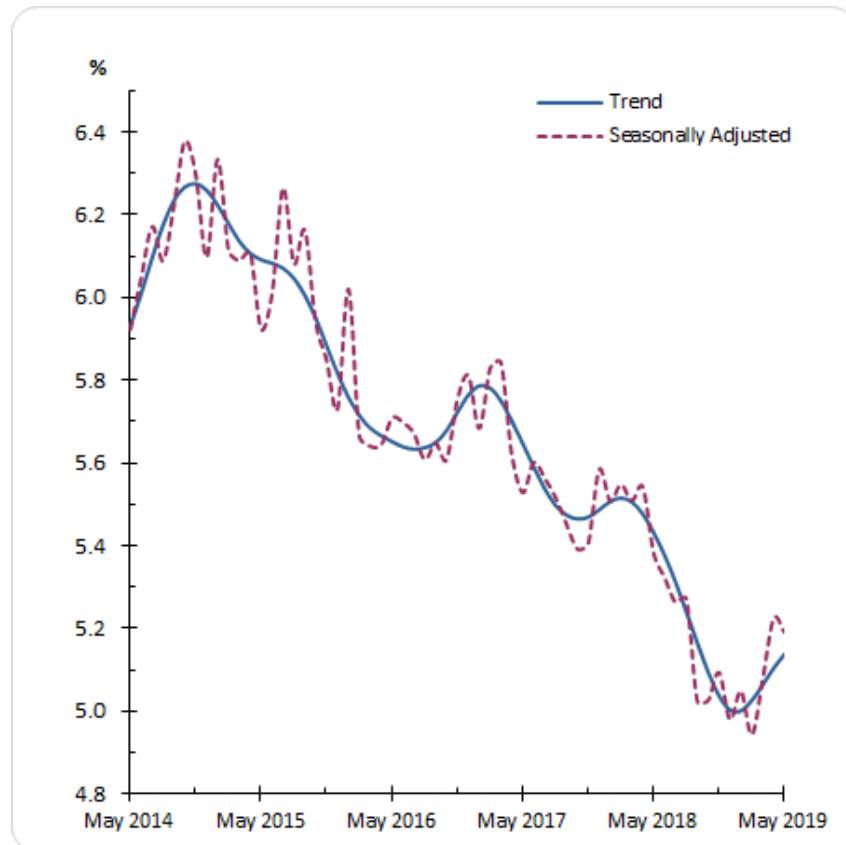
#### MAY KEY FIGURES

	Apr 19	May 19	Apr 19 to May 19	May 18 to May 19
<b>Trend</b>				
Employed persons ('000)	12,828.2	12,856.6	28.4	2.7%
Unemployed persons ('000)	689.4	695.2	5.8	-3.5%
Unemployment rate (%)	5.1	5.1	0.0 pts	-0.3 pts
Underemployment rate (%)	8.4	8.5	0.1 pts	0.0 pts
Participation rate (%)	65.8	65.9	0.1 pts	0.4 pts
Monthly hours worked in all jobs ('000 000)	1,778.8	1,782.1	3.3	2.5%
<b>Seasonally Adjusted</b>				
Employed persons ('000)	12,826.0	12,868.2	42.3	2.9%
Unemployed persons ('000)	707.0	704.7	-2.4	-1.0%
Unemployment rate (%)	5.2	5.2	0.0 pts	-0.2 pts
Underemployment rate (%)	8.5	8.6	0.1 pts	0.1 pts
Participation rate (%)	65.9	66.0	0.1 pts	0.6 pts
Monthly hours worked in all jobs ('000 000)	1,780.9	1,775.0	-5.9	2.1%

#### EMPLOYED PERSONS



## UNEMPLOYMENT RATE



## MAY KEY POINTS

### TREND ESTIMATES

- Employment increased 28,400 to 12,856,600 persons. Full-time employment increased 13,900 to 8,799,800 persons and part-time employment increased 14,500 to 4,056,800 persons.
- Unemployment increased 5,800 to 695,200 persons.
- Unemployment rate remained steady at 5.1%.
- Participation rate increased 0.1 pts to 65.9%.
- Monthly hours worked in all jobs increased 3.3 million hours to 1,782.1 million hours.

### SEASONALLY ADJUSTED ESTIMATES

- Employment increased 42,300 to 12,868,200 persons. Full-time employment increased 2,400 to 8,792,900 persons and part-time employment increased 39,800 to 4,075,400 persons.
- Unemployment decreased 2,400 to 704,700 persons.
- Unemployment rate remained steady at 5.2%.
- Participation rate increased 0.1 pts to 66.0%.
- Monthly hours worked in all jobs decreased 5.9 million hours to 1,775.0 million hours.

## LABOUR UNDERUTILISATION

- The monthly trend underemployment rate increased 0.1 pts to 8.5%. The monthly underutilisation rate increased 0.1 pts to 13.6%.
- The monthly seasonally adjusted underemployment rate increased 0.1 pts to 8.6%. The

monthly underutilisation rate remained steady at 13.7%.

## NOTES

### FORTHCOMING ISSUES

Issue	Release Date
June 2019	18 July 2019
July 2019	15 August 2019
August 2019	19 September 2019
September 2019	17 October 2019
October 2019	14 November 2019
November 2019	19 December 2019

### UPDATE ON QUARTERLY REBENCHMARKING

The ABS has revised the original Labour Force series for the previous 19 months to reflect the latest available preliminary and final estimates of Estimated Resident Population. This process ensures that the Labour Force series promptly reflects any change in population trends and minimises the size of revisions that can occur when the series are rebenchmarked following each Census of Population and Housing. It is expected that, on most occasions, the quarterly revisions will not be significant.

For further information about rebenchmarking, refer to the "Rebenchmarking Labour Force Estimates" article published in the February 2015 issue of *Labour Force, Australia* (cat. no. 6202.0).

### UPDATE ON THE RELEASE OF 6224.0.55.001

The ABS was due to release the *Labour Force, Australia: Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Families* (cat. no. 6224.0.55.001) on 27 September 2018, with annual data up to June 2018.

During the quality assurance of the 2018 data and the recent time series, the ABS identified that there was a greater level of variability in the weighted estimates for some of the less common family and household types (particularly multi-family households), and therefore opted to delay the release to 2019.

The ABS has identified an issue with some family coding, which is affecting a range of key family estimates - particularly changes between June 2015 and June 2017. The issue is also impacting, to a lesser extent, on some variables in the four "relationship in household" products in Labour Force, Australia, Detailed – Electronic Delivery (cat. no. 6291.0.55.001) – including pivot tables FM1-FM4, as well as the first time series spreadsheet in that release, which contains estimates by social marital status.

The 2019 publication will contain data for both June 2018 and June 2019. Revised data for the 2015-2017 period, will be released with a complete time series with the release of June 2020 data. The ABS apologises for this delay. Should you have any question regarding this data, please contact us at [labour.statistics@abs.gov.au](mailto:labour.statistics@abs.gov.au)

### ROUNDING

Estimates of changes in the commentary have been calculated using unrounded estimates, and may be different from, but are more accurate than, movement obtained from the rounded estimates. Graphs also depict unrounded estimates.

## SAMPLING ERROR

The estimates in this publication are based on a sample survey. Published estimates and movements are subject to sampling variability. Standard errors give a measure of sampling variability. The interval bounded by two standard errors is the 95% confidence interval, which provides a way of looking at the variability inherent in estimates. There is a 95% chance that the true value of the estimate lies within that interval.

## MOVEMENTS IN SEASONALLY ADJUSTED SERIES BETWEEN APRIL 2019 AND MAY 2019

	Monthly change	95% Confidence interval		
Total Employment	42 300	-18 900	to	103 500
Total Unemployment	-2 400	-39 400	to	34 600
Unemployment rate	0.0 pts	-0.2 pts	to	0.2 pts
Participation rate	0.1 pts	-0.3 pts	to	0.5 pts

## INQUIRIES

For further information about these and related statistics, email [client.services@abs.gov.au](mailto:client.services@abs.gov.au) or contact the National Information and Referral Service on 1300 135 070.

# Labour Force Commentary May 2019

## LABOUR FORCE COMMENTARY MAY 2019

### NATIONAL ESTIMATES

### TREND ESTIMATES

Australia's trend estimate of employment increased by 28,400 persons in May 2019, with:

- the number of unemployed persons increasing by 5,800 persons;
- the unemployment rate remaining steady at 5.1%;
- the underemployment rate increasing to 8.5%;
- the underutilisation rate increasing to 13.6%;
- the participation rate increasing to 65.9%; and
- the employment to population ratio remaining steady at 62.5%.

Over the past year, trend employment increased by 332,900 persons (or 2.7%), which was above the average annual growth rate over the past 20 years of 2.0%. Over the same 12 month period the trend employment to population ratio, which is a measure of how employed the population (aged 15 years and over) is, increased by 0.5 percentage points (pts) to 62.5%.

Trend employment increased by 28,400 persons between April and May 2019. This represents an increase of 0.22%, which was above the monthly average growth rate over the past 20 years of 0.17%.

Underpinning these net changes in employment is extensive dynamic change, which occurs each

month in the labour market. In recent months there has generally been considerably more than 300,000 people entering employment, and more than 300,000 leaving employment. There is also further dynamic change in the hours that people work, which results in changes in the full-time and part-time composition of employment.

Trend full-time employment increased by 13,900 persons between April and May 2019, and part-time employment increased by 14,500 persons. Compared to a year ago, there are 252,100 more persons employed full-time and 80,900 more persons employed part-time. This compositional shift led to a decrease in the part-time share of employment over the past 12 months, from 31.7% to 31.6%.

The trend estimate of monthly hours worked in all jobs increased by 3.3 million hours (or 0.2%) in May 2019 to 1,782.1 million hours. Monthly hours worked increased by 2.5% over the past year, which was below the increase in employed persons (2.7%). The average hours worked per employed person was 138.6 hours per month, or around 31.9 hours per week.

The trend unemployment rate remained steady at 5.1% in May 2019. The number of unemployed persons increased by 5,800 to 695,200 persons. Over the past year, the trend unemployment rate decreased by 0.3 pts, with the number of unemployed decreasing by 25,500 persons.

The trend participation rate increased to 65.9% in May 2019, and was 0.4 pts higher than in May 2018. The female participation rate increased by less than 0.1 pts to 60.8% and the male participation rate increased by less than 0.1 pts to 71.1%.

The labour force includes the total number of employed and unemployed persons. Over the past year, the labour force increased by 307,400 persons (2.3%). This increase was above the rate of increase for the total Civilian Population aged 15 years and over (356,000 persons, or 1.8%).

The trend participation rate for 15-64 year olds, which controls (in part) for the effects of an aging population increased 0.1 pts to 78.4%. The gap between male and female participation rates in this age range is less than 10 pts at 83.2% and 73.7% respectively, continuing the long term convergence of male and female participation.

The trend participation rate for 15-24 year olds (who are often referred to as the "youth" group in the labour market) remained steady at 68.1%. The unemployment rate for this group increased by less than 0.1 pts to 11.8% in May 2019 and increased by 0.1% since May last year.

The trend series smooths the more volatile seasonally adjusted estimates and provide the best measure of the underlying behaviour of the labour market.

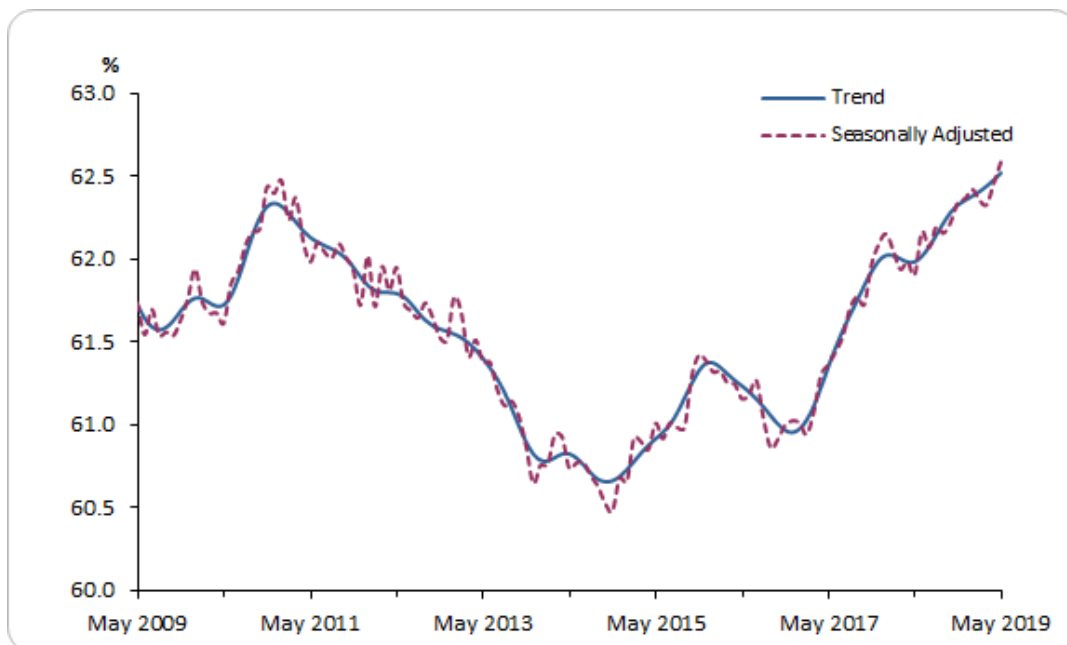
## **SEASONALLY ADJUSTED ESTIMATES**

Seasonally adjusted employment increased by 42,300 persons from April to May 2019. The underlying composition of the net change was an increase of 2,400 persons in full-time employment and an increase of 39,800 persons in part-time employment. Since May 2018, full-time employment increased by 266,300 persons, while part-time employment increased by 93,900 persons.

Seasonally adjusted monthly hours worked in all jobs decreased by 5.9 million hours (or 0.3%) in May to 1,775.0 million hours.

The seasonally adjusted employment to population ratio increased by 0.1 pts to 62.6% in May 2019, and increased by 0.7 pts from the same time last year.

## **GRAPH 1. EMPLOYMENT TO POPULATION RATIO, PERSONS, May 2009 to May 2019**



The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate remained steady at 5.2% in May 2019. The participation rate increased 0.1 pts to 66.0%.

## STATE AND TERRITORY ESTIMATES

### TREND ESTIMATES

In May 2019, increases in trend employment were observed in all states and territories except the Northern Territory (down 100 persons). The largest increases were recorded in New South Wales (up 15,900 persons), Victoria (up 8,300 persons) and Queensland (up 6,200 persons).

Over the past year, increases in employment were observed in all states and territories except Tasmania (down 2,300 persons) and the Northern Territory (down 9,200 persons). The largest increases were in New South Wales (up 142,300 persons), Victoria (up 127,700 persons) and Queensland (up 46,400 persons). The highest annual employment growth rates were in Victoria at 3.9%, followed by New South Wales at 3.6% and Queensland at 1.9%. Year-on-year growth in trend employment was above the 20 year average in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia.

The monthly trend unemployment rate increased by 0.1 pts in the Australian Capital Territory (3.9%). The monthly trend unemployment rate remained unchanged in all other states and territories.

The monthly trend participation rate increased by 0.2 pts in New South Wales (65.7%) and increased by 0.1 pts in South Australia (63.3%) and Queensland (65.7%). The only decrease was observed in the Northern Territory (down 0.6 pts to 71.4%). The monthly trend participation rate remained unchanged in all remaining states and territories.

### SEASONALLY ADJUSTED ESTIMATES

In seasonally adjusted terms, the largest increase in employment was in New South Wales (up 38,500 persons), followed by Victoria (up 28,600 persons) and Queensland (up 7,800 persons). The only decreases were in Western Australia (down 4,000 persons) and Tasmania (down 400 persons).

Seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased in Queensland (up 0.4 pts to 6.2%) and Western Australia (up 0.2 pts to 6.3%). Decreases in the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate were observed in South Australia (down 0.4 pts to 5.7%), Tasmania (down 0.4 pts to 6.4%) and

Victoria (down 0.3 pts to 4.6%).

The largest increases in the seasonally adjusted participation rate were in New South Wales (up 0.5 pts to 66.2%), Victoria (up 0.3 pts to 66.2%) and Queensland (up 0.3 pts to 65.9%). The seasonally adjusted participation rate decreased in Tasmania (down 0.4 pts to 60.2%) and Western Australia (down 0.1 pts to 68.1%).

Seasonally adjusted estimates are not published for the two territories.

**TABLE 1. UNEMPLOYMENT RATE, STATES AND TERRITORIES**

	<b>Trend</b>	<b>May 2019</b>	<b>Seasonally Adjusted</b>	
	<b>April 2019</b>		<b>April 2019</b>	<b>May 2019</b>
	%	%	%	%
New South Wales	4.4	4.4	4.6	4.6
Victoria	4.7	4.7	4.8	4.6
Queensland	6.0	6.0	5.9	6.2
South Australia	5.9	5.8	6.1	5.7
Western Australia	6.1	6.2	6.1	6.3
Tasmania	6.6	6.6	6.8	6.4
Northern Territory	4.5	4.5	np	np
Australian Capital Territory	3.8	3.9	np	np
Australia	5.1	5.1	5.2	5.2

np not available for publication but included in totals where applicable, unless otherwise indicated.

## Insights from the Original Data

### INSIGHTS FROM THE ORIGINAL DATA

#### SAMPLE COMPOSITION

The Labour Force Survey sample can be thought of as comprising eight sub-samples (or rotation groups), with each sub-sample remaining in the survey for eight months, and one rotation group "rotating out" each month and being replaced by a new group "rotating in". This sample rotation is important in ensuring that seven-eighths of the sample are common from one month to the next, to ensure that changes in the estimates reflect real changes in the labour market, rather than the sample. In addition, the replacement sample is generally selected from the same geographic areas as the outgoing one, as part of a representative sampling approach.

When considering movements in the original estimates, it is possible to decompose the sample into three components:

- the matched common sample (survey respondents who responded in both April and May);
- the unmatched common sample (survey respondents who responded in May but who did not respond in April, or vice versa); and
- the incoming rotation group (survey respondents who replaced respondents who rotated out in April)

The detailed decomposition of each of these movements is included in the data cube 'Insights From the Original Data'.

In considering the three components of the sample, it is important to remember that the matched common sample describes the change observed for the same respondents in April and May, while the other two components reflect differences between the aggregate labour force status of different groups of people.

While the rotation groups are designed to be representative of the population, the outgoing and incoming rotation groups will almost always have somewhat different characteristics, as a result of the groups representing a sample of different households and people. The design of the survey, including the weighting and estimation processes, ensures that these differences are generally relatively minor and seeks to ensure that differences in characteristics of rotation groups do not affect the representativeness of the survey and its estimates. Monthly estimates are always designed to be representative of their respective months, regardless of the relative contribution of the three components of the sample.

### **INCOMING ROTATION GROUP**

In original terms, the incoming rotation group in May 2019 had a higher employment to population ratio than the group it replaced (64.0% in May, compared to 62.3% in April 2019), and was higher than the ratio for the entire sample (62.9%). The full-time employment to population ratio of the incoming rotation group was higher than the group it replaced (43.1% in May, compared to 42.6% in April 2019), and was higher than the ratio for the entire sample (42.7%).

The unemployment rate of the incoming rotation group was 0.1 pts lower than the group it replaced (4.8% in May, compared to 4.9% in April 2019) and was lower than the unemployment rate for the whole sample (5.1%). The participation rate was 1.7 pts higher than the group it replaced (67.2% in May, compared to 65.5% in April 2019) and was higher than the sample as a whole (66.3%).

### **OUTGOING ROTATION GROUP**

In looking ahead to the June 2019 estimates, in original terms, the outgoing rotation group in May 2019, which will be replaced by a new incoming rotation group in June 2019, has a higher employment to population ratio (63.2% in May 2019) compared to the sample as a whole (62.9%). The full-time employment to population ratio (43.1%) is higher than the ratio for the entire sample (42.7%).

The outgoing rotation group had a lower unemployment rate in May 2019 (4.6%) compared to the sample as a whole (5.1%). The participation rate for the outgoing rotation group in May 2019 is the same as the sample as a whole (66.3%).

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF TREND DATA**

As the gross flows and rotation group data are presented in original terms they are not directly comparable to the seasonally adjusted and trend data discussed elsewhere in the commentary, and are included to provide additional information for the original data. Since the original data are unadjusted, they have a considerable level of inherent sampling variability, which is specifically adjusted for in the trend series. The trend data provides the best measure of the underlying behaviour of the labour market and is the focus of the commentary in this publication.

### **ROTATION GROUP ANALYSIS FOR STATES AND TERRITORIES**

In addition to analysis across the entire sample, the ABS also undertakes similar analysis for the responding sample in each state and territory each month, and highlights where there is a notable change for users to be aware of. For example, in the release of July 2018 data, on 16 August 2018, the ABS noted that "the rotation group effects in July 2018 were most pronounced in Queensland, Tasmania and the ACT".

As for its reporting for the entire sample, where the ABS has not highlighted a notable incoming rotation group effect, any larger changes should therefore be considered to reflect a broader change across the sample.



# Article Archive

This section provides an archive of articles and analysis published in Labour Force, Australia (cat. no. 6202.0) and Labour Force, Australia, Detailed - Electronic Delivery (cat. no. 6291.0.55.001) and Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, Quarterly (cat. no. 6291.0.55.003), promoting the effective use of labour force statistics. Articles are sorted by publication month.

Articles on labour related topics are also available in Australian Labour Market Statistics (cat. no. 6105.0) and Australian Social Trends (cat. no. 4102.0).

## LABOUR FORCE SURVEY ARCHIVE

### 2019 April

Online Collection in the Labour Force Survey (cat. no. 6202.0)

#### March

Annual Seasonal Re-analysis (cat. no. 6202.0)

#### January

How many people work one hour per week? (cat. no. 6202.0)

### 2018

#### September

What's New in the Labour Force (cat. no. 6202.0)

Underemployment in Australia (cat. no. 6202.0)

#### June

Information Paper: Labour Force Survey Sample Design, July 2018 (cat. no. 6269.0)

#### April

Online Collection in the Labour Force Survey (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

#### March

What's New in the Labour Force (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

Annual Seasonal Re-analysis (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

Improvements to Trend Estimation (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

#### February

What's New in the Labour Force (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001, cat. no. 6291.0.55.003)

Improvements to Trend Estimation (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001, cat. no. 6291.0.55.003)

#### January

What's New in the Labour Force (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

500th Issue of 6202.0 (cat. no. 6202.0)

### 2017 December

Advice on Reporting Regional Labour Force Data (cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

#### November

What's New in the Labour Force (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

#### October

What's New in the Labour Force (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

Major Rebenchmarking of Labour Force Series (cat. no. 6202.0.55.003)

#### September

What's New in the Labour Force (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

## Labour Force Explained

### August

Labour Force Pivot Tables (cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

### July

Labour Force Pivot Tables (cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

### June

What's New in the Labour Force (cat. no. 6202.0)

Labour Force Pivot Tables (cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

### April

Online Collection in the Labour Force Survey (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

Labour Force Pivot Tables (cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

### March

Annual Seasonal Re-analysis (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

### February

Changes to Filter Lengths used in Labour Statistics (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

What's New in the Labour Force (cat. no. 6291.0.55.003)

Changes to Filter Lengths used in Labour Statistics (cat. no. 6291.0.55.003)

## 2016

### November

Spotlight on Underemployment (cat. no. 6202.0)

Labour Force Pivot Tables (cat. no. 6291.0.55.003)

### September

Labour Force Pivot Tables (cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

### August

What's New in the Labour Force (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

Online Collection In The Labour Force Survey (cat. no. 6202.0)

Expanded Education data from the Labour Force Survey (cat. no. 6291.0.55.003)

### July

What's New in the Labour Force (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

Revisions to Monthly hours worked in all jobs (cat. no. 6202.0)

Advice on Reporting Regional Labour Force Data (cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

### March

Annual Seasonal Re-analysis (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

### February

What's New in the Labour Force (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001, cat. no. 6291.0.55.003)

Online Collection In The Labour Force Survey (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001, cat. no. 6291.0.55.003)

### January

What's New in the Labour Force (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

## 2015

### December

What's New in the Labour Force (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

## **November**

What's New in the Labour Force (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001, cat. no. 6291.0.55.003)

Update on Recommendation 7 from the Independent Technical Review (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001, cat. no. 6291.0.55.003)

Measures of Underemployment and Underutilisation (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001, cat. no. 6291.0.55.003)

Measures of full-time, part-time job search (cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

Measures of leave entitlements (cat. no. 6291.0.55.003)

Measures of current duration of employment (cat. no. 6291.0.55.003)

Volume measures of underutilisation (cat. no. 6291.0.55.003)

Measures of retrenchment (cat. no. 6291.0.55.003)

Measures of sector of main job (cat. no. 6291.0.55.003)

## **October**

What's New in the Labour Force (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

## **September**

What's New in the Labour Force (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

## **August**

Online Collection in the Labour Force Survey (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001, cat. no. 6291.0.55.003)

## **July**

What's New in the Labour Force (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

Progress with recommendations from the Independent Technical Review (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

Change to Status in Employment Output (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

## **June**

What's New in the Labour Force (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

Assessing Volatility in the Labour Force Series (cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

Update on Recommendations 10 and 11 from the Independent Technical Review (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

## **May**

What's New in the Labour Force (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001, cat. no. 6291.0.55.003)

Update on Recommendation 7 from the Independent Technical Review (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001, cat. no. 6291.0.55.003)

## **April**

What's New in the Labour Force (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

## **March**

What's New in the Labour Force (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

Annual Seasonal Reanalysis (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

Update on Recommendations from the Independent Technical Review (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

## **February**

What's new in the Labour Force (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001, cat. no. 6291.0.55.003)

Online Collection in the Labour Force Survey (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001, cat. no. 6291.0.55.003)

Rebenchmarking Labour Force Estimates (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001, cat. no. 6291.0.55.003)

## **January**

What's new in the Labour force (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

## **2014**

### **December**

What's new in the Labour force (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

### **November**

What's new in the Labour force (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001, cat. no.

6291.0.55.003)

Independent Technical Review into the Labour Force Survey and ABS Response (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001, cat. no. 6291.0.55.003)

### **October**

Removing the effect of Supplementary Surveys from seasonally adjusted estimates (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

### **September**

Changes in this and upcoming labour force issues (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

### **August**

Changes in this and upcoming labour force issues (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001, cat. no. 6291.0.55.003)

### **July**

What's new in the Labour force (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

### **June**

What's new in the Labour force (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

### **May**

What's new in the Labour force (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001, cat. no. 6291.0.55.003)

### **February**

What's New in the Labour Force (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001, cat. no. 6291.0.55.003)

Annual Seasonal Reanalysis (cat. no. 6202.0)

Analysis of changes to Labour Force Regional Estimates (cat. no. 6291.0.55.003)

Rebenchmarking Labour Force Estimates to the 2011 Census of Population and Housing (cat. no. 6291.0.55.003)

### **January**

Rebenchmarking Labour Force Estimates to the 2011 Census of Population and Housing (cat. no. 6202.0)

Analysis of changes to Labour Force Regional Estimates (cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

## **2013**

### **December**

What's New in the Labour Force (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

Understanding the Australian Labour Force using ABS statistics (cat. no. 6202.0)

### **November**

What's new in the Labour Force (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001, cat. no. 6291.0.55.003)

### **September**

What's new in the Labour Force (cat. no. 6202.0)

Understanding full-time/part-time status in the Labour Force Survey (cat. no. 6202.0)

## **June**

What's new in the Labour Force (cat. no. 6202.0)

Fact Sheet Did You Know - Underemployment (cat. no. 6202.0)

## **May**

What's new in Labour Force (cat. no. 6202.0)

New Labour Force Sample Design (cat. no. 6202.0)

Annual Seasonal Reanalysis (cat. no. 6202.0)

## **April**

What's New in Labour Force (cat. no. 6202.0)

Transition to online collection of the Labour Force Survey (cat. no. 6202.0)

## **February**

What's New in the Labour Force (cat. no. 6202.0)

Estimating Jobs in the Australian Labour Market (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

Understanding Labour Force (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001, cat. no. 6291.0.55.003)

Employed Persons,Trend Estimates (cat. no. 6202.0)

Unemployed Persons,Trend Estimates (cat. no. 6202.0)

Aggregate Monthly Hours Worked,Trend Estimates (cat. no. 6202.0)

## **January**

What's new in Labour Force (cat. no. 6202.0)

Forthcoming improvements to the content of the Labour Force and Labour Supplementary Surveys (cat. no. 6202.0)

Understanding Labour Force (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

# **2012**

## **November**

Rebenchmarking of Labour Force Series (cat. no. 6202.0)

Understanding Labour Force (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.003)

## **August**

What's New in the Labour Force (cat. no. 6291.0.55.003)

Understanding Labour Force (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.003)

Employed Persons,Trend Estimates (cat. no. 6202.0)

Unemployed Persons,Trend Estimates (cat. no. 6202.0)

Aggregate Monthly Hours Worked,Trend Estimates (cat. no. 6202.0)

## **July**

Upcoming changes to the Labour Force Survey (cat. no. 6202.0)

Understanding Labour Force (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

## **June**

What's New in Labour Force (cat. no. 6202.0)

Labour Household Surveys content review and the Labour Force Survey (cat. no. 6202.0)

Understanding Labour Force (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

## **May**

What's New in the Labour Force (cat. no. 6291.0.55.003)

Employment and mining in Queensland, New South Wales and Western Australia (cat. no. 6202.0)

Understanding Labour Force (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001, cat. no. 6291.0.55.003)

## **April**

Population Benchmarks and Labour Force Survey (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)  
ABS Response to recent concerns expressed about employment estimates (cat. no. 6202.0)  
Understanding Labour Force (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

### **March**

Annual Seasonal Reanalysis (cat. no. 6202.0)  
Understanding Labour Force (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

### **February**

Exploring Labour Force Data on joblessness (cat. no. 6202.0)  
Understanding Labour Force (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)

### **January**

Employment level estimates versus employment to population explained (cat. no. 6202.0)

## **2011**

### **November**

Understanding Labour Force (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001, cat. no. 6291.0.55.003)  
Aggregate monthly hours worked, Trend estimates (cat. no. 6202.0)  
Underemployment rate, Trend estimates (cat. no. 6202.0)  
Labour force underutilisation rate, Trend estimates (cat. no. 6202.0)

### **February**

Historical Revisions (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001, cat. no. 6291.0.55.003)

### **January**

Impact of the floods on the Labour Force Survey (cat. no. 6202.0, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)  
Employed Persons, Trend estimates (cat. no. 6202.0)  
Unemployed Persons, Trend estimates (cat. no. 6202.0)

## **About this Release**

Summary results of the monthly Labour Force Survey containing estimates of employed and unemployed persons classified by sex, full-time / part-time status, states and territories and some age groups; and by persons not in the labour force.

# **Explanatory Notes**

## **Explanatory Notes**

### **EXPLANATORY NOTES**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

**1** This publication contains estimates of the civilian labour force derived from the Labour Force Survey component of the Monthly Population Survey. The full time series for estimates from this publication are also available electronically. More detailed estimates are released one week after this publication in various electronic formats - see Labour Force, Australia, Detailed - Electronic Delivery (cat. no. 6291.0.55.001) and Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, Quarterly (cat. no. 6291.0.55.003).

## CONCEPTS, SOURCES AND METHODS

**2** The conceptual framework used in Australia's Labour Force Survey aligns closely with the standards and guidelines set out in Resolutions of International Conferences of Labour Statisticians. Descriptions of the underlying concepts and structure of Australia's labour force statistics, and the sources and methods used in compiling the estimates, are presented in Labour Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods (cat. no. 6102.0.55.001) which is available on the ABS website <https://www.abs.gov.au>.

## LABOUR FORCE SURVEY

**3** The Labour Force Survey is based on a multi-stage area sample of private dwellings (currently approximately 26,000 houses, flats, etc.), a list sample of non-private dwellings (hotels, motels, etc.), and covers approximately 0.32% of the civilian population of Australia aged 15 years and over.

**4** Information is obtained from the occupants of selected dwellings by specially trained interviewers using computer-assisted interviewing, or self-completion online.

**5** Households selected for the Labour Force Survey are interviewed each month for eight months, with one-eighth of the sample being replaced each month. The first interview is generally conducted face-to-face. Subsequent interviews are conducted by telephone (if acceptable to the respondent).

**6** From December 2012 to April 2013, the ABS conducted a trial of online electronic data collection. Respondents in a single rotation group (i.e. one-eighth of the survey sample) were offered the option of self completing their labour force survey questionnaire online instead of via a face-to-face or telephone interview. From May 2013, the ABS expanded the offer of online electronic collection to 50% of each new incoming rotation group. For more information see the article in the April 2013 issue of this publication. From September 2013, online electronic collection has been offered to 100% of private dwellings in each incoming rotation group. From April 2014, 100% of private dwellings are being offered online electronic collection.

**7** The interviews are generally conducted during the two weeks beginning on the Sunday between the 5th and 11th of each month. The information obtained relates to the week before the interview (i.e. the reference week). Each year, to deal with the operational difficulties involved with collecting and processing the Labour Force Survey around the Christmas and New Year holiday period, interviews for December start four weeks after November interviews start (i.e. between the 3rd and 9th December), and January interviews start five weeks after December interviews start. As a result, January interviewing may commence as early as the 7th or as late as the 13th, depending on the year. Occasionally, circumstances that present significant operational difficulties for survey collection can result in a change to the normal pattern for the start of interviewing.

**8** Estimates from the Labour Force Survey are usually published first in this publication 39 days after the commencement of interviews for that month, with the exception of estimates for each December which are usually published 46 days after the commencement of interviews.

## SCOPE OF SURVEY

**9** The Labour Force Survey includes all persons aged 15 years and over except members of the permanent defence forces, certain diplomatic personnel of overseas governments customarily excluded from census and estimated population counts, overseas residents in Australia, and members of non-Australian defence forces (and their dependants) stationed in Australia.

## COVERAGE

**10** In the Labour Force Survey, coverage rules are applied which aim to ensure that each person is associated with only one dwelling, and hence has only one chance of selection. The coverage rules are necessarily a balance between theoretical and operational considerations. Nevertheless, the chance of a person being enumerated at two separate dwellings in the survey is considered to be negligible.

## POPULATION BENCHMARKS

**11** The Labour Force Survey estimates are calculated in such a way as to add to independent estimates of the civilian population aged 15 years and over (population benchmarks). These population benchmarks are based on the most recently released estimates of Final, Revised and Preliminary quarterly Estimated Resident Population (ERP). For information on the methodology used to produce the ERP see Australian Demographic Statistics (cat. no. 3101.0). Since the most recently released ERP estimates lag the current time period for Labour Force estimates by nine months, the Labour Force population benchmarks are created by projecting forward three quarters past the most recently released quarterly ERP estimates. The projection is based on the historical pattern of each population component - births, deaths, interstate migration and net overseas migration (NOM). Estimates of NOM are supplemented with other data sources to better reflect short-term population changes. These estimates draw on information provided by the Department of Home Affairs.

**12** The revision status of quarterly ERP data changes over time from, preliminary, to revised, to final, as natural increase, overseas migration, and interstate migration component data is revised to incorporate more up to date data. These revisions flow through to the population benchmarks used to rebenchmark the Labour Force estimates on a quarterly basis.

**13** Every five years, the ERP series are revised to incorporate additional information available from the latest Census of Population and Housing (Census). Labour Force Survey population benchmarks, and the estimates, are revised following this five-yearly revision in the ERP. The process of incorporating the revised population benchmarks is referred to as 'rebasings'. The rebasing process is subject to a revision going from, preliminary rebasing approximately a year after a census, to final rebasing approximately 2 years after a census. Preliminary rebasing occurred in the November 2017 issue of Labour Force, Australia (cat. no. 6202.0), at the same time revisions were made to historical Labour Force estimates from July 2011 to October 2017. The final rebasing occurred in November 2018 Labour Force, Australia - Rebenchmarked Estimates, Oct 2018 (cat. no. 6202.0.55.003) with the series from July 2011 to November 2018 rebenchmarked to align with final ERP benchmarks from the 2016 Census. For more information on revised ERP estimates, refer to the December 2016 issue of Australian Demographic Statistics (cat. no. 3101.0) released in June 2017.

**14** In between Censuses, the ABS revises the Labour Force population benchmarks using the latest ERP according to the paragraphs above. These were introduced in the July 2010, November 2012 and April 2013 issues. The revisions planned for the October 2013, April 2014 and November 2014 issues were not implemented (see What's New in the Labour Force in the September 2013 issue and Changes in this Issue in the October 2014 issue of this publication). From the February 2015 issue, rebenchmarking were undertaken quarterly in the February, May, August and November issues, apart from May 2015. For more information, refer to the article Rebenchmarking of Labour Force Series in the February 2015 issue of this publication.

## ESTIMATION METHOD

**15** The estimation method used in the Labour Force Survey is Composite Estimation, which was introduced in May 2007. In January 2014 composite estimation was applied to all estimates from July 1991 as part of the 2011 Census rebenchmarking. Composite Estimation combines data collected in the previous six months with current month's data to produce the current month's



estimates, thereby exploiting the high correlation between overlapping samples across months in the Labour Force Survey. The Composite Estimator combines the previous and current months' data by applying different factors according to length of time in the survey. After these factors are applied, the seven months of data are weighted to align with current month population benchmarks. For details see Information Paper: Forthcoming Changes to Labour Force Statistics, 2007 (cat. no. 6292.0).

## COMPARABILITY OF SERIES

**16** From April 1986, the definition of employed persons was changed to include persons who worked without pay between 1 and 14 hours per week in a family business or on a farm (i.e. contributing family workers). For further information, see paragraphs 22 and 23 of the Explanatory Notes in the February 2003 issue of Labour Force, Australia (cat. no. 6203.0).

**17** The ABS introduced telephone interviewing into the Labour Force Survey in August 1996. Implementation was phased in for each new sample group from August 1996 to February 1997. During the period of implementation, the new method produced different estimates than would have been obtained under the old methodology. The effect dissipated over the final months of implementation and was no longer discernible from February 1997. The estimates for February 1997 and onwards are directly comparable to estimates for periods prior to August 1996. For further details, see the feature article in the June 1997 issue of Labour Force, Australia (cat. no. 6203.0).

**18** From April 2001 the Labour Force Survey was conducted using a redesigned questionnaire containing additional data items and some minor definitional changes. The definition of unemployed persons was changed to include all persons who were waiting to start work and were available to start in the reference week. This change was introduced in February 2004, when historical unit record data were revised from April 2001 to January 2004. This revision created a small trend break at April 2001 in unemployed persons and unemployment rate series. For further details, see Information Paper: Forthcoming Changes to Labour Force Statistics, 2003 (cat. no. 6292.0), released in December 2003. From July 2014 the Labour Force Survey questionnaire was further redesigned and definitional changes made to active job search steps and duration of job search. For further details, see the Glossary and Information Paper: Forthcoming Changes to Labour Force Statistics, June 2014 (cat. no. 6292.0), released in October 2014.

**19** Core labour force series were revised in April 2001 for the period April 1986 to March 2001 for the remaining definitional changes introduced with the redesigned questionnaire, to reduce the impact of the changes on labour force series. For further details, see Information Paper: Implementing the Redesigned Labour Force Survey Questionnaire (cat. no. 6295.0) and the 2004 issue of Information Paper: Questionnaires Used in the Labour Force Survey (cat. no. 6232.0).

**20** In May 2007, an improved method of estimation, known as composite estimation, was introduced into the Labour Force Survey. In introducing this change, the ABS revised unit record data from April 2001 to April 2007 based on the new estimation method. No change was identified in the trend breaks in the unemployed persons and unemployment rate series which arose with the introduction of a redesigned survey form in April 2001 (as noted above in paragraph 18). In January 2014 composite estimation was applied to all estimates from July 1991 as part of the 2011 Census rebenchmarking. For further details, see Information Paper: Forthcoming Changes to Labour Force Statistics, 2007 (cat. no. 6292.0).

**21** As one of a range of ABS savings initiatives for the 2008-09 financial year, there was a 24% reduction in the LFS sample size for the period July 2008 to August 2009, relative to the June 2008 sample size. The sample reduction was reversed from September 2009 to December 2009, with December 2009 estimates being the first produced under the fully reinstated sample.

## LABOUR FORCE SURVEY SAMPLE

**22** The current Labour Force Survey sample has been selected using information from the 2016 Census of Population and Housing and the ABS Address Register.

**23** Between July 2018 and February 2019, a new sample was phased in over eight months with the incoming rotation group being selected from the ABS Address Register.

**24** Updated sampling fractions were also phased in with the introduction of the ABS Address Register selected sample. The state sampling fraction method applies a predefined skip interval for each state which defines the probability of an address within each respective state being selected for the survey. Each incoming rotation group that was phased in had this new state skip applied.

**25** Detailed information on the new sample, including the use of the ABS Address Register, can be found in Information Paper: Labour Force Survey Sample Design, July 2018 (cat. no. 6269.0), which was released on 30 July 2018.

## **RELIABILITY OF ESTIMATES**

**26** Two types of error are possible in an estimate based on a sample survey: sampling error and non-sampling error.

**27** Sampling error occurs because a sample, rather than the entire population, is surveyed. One measure of the likely difference resulting from not including all dwellings in the survey is given by the standard error. There are about two chances in three that a sample estimate will differ by less than one standard error from the figure that would have been obtained if all dwellings had been included in the survey, and about nineteen chances in twenty that the difference will be less than two standard errors. Standard errors of key estimates for the latest month and of movements since the previous month of these estimates are shown in the standard errors section of this publication. Standard errors for other estimates and other movements may be calculated by using the spreadsheet contained in Labour Force Survey Standard Errors, Data Cube (cat. no. 6298.0.55.001) which is available free of charge on the ABS website <https://www.abs.gov.au>.

**28** Non-sampling error arises from inaccuracies in collecting, recording and processing the data. Every effort is made to minimise reporting error by the careful design of questionnaires, intensive training and supervision of interviewers, and efficient data processing procedures. Non-sampling error also arises because information cannot be obtained from all persons selected in the survey. The Australian Labour Force Survey receives a higher level of co-operation from individuals in selected dwellings compared to other countries, with the average response rate over the past 3 years being 92.0 per cent, and the average rate over the past year being 91.5 per cent (to the nearest quarter of a per cent, in rounded terms). See Glossary for definition of response rate.

## **SEASONAL ADJUSTMENT AND TREND ESTIMATION**

**29** Any original time series can be thought of as a combination of three broad and distinctly different types of behaviour, each representing the impact of certain types of real world events on the information being collected: systematic calendar related events, short-term irregular fluctuations and long-term cyclical behaviour. A multiplicative decomposition model is applied in the seasonal adjustment of Labour Force Time Series, where the original time series (O) is considered as the product of the underlying trend (T), a systematic calendar related or seasonal component (S) and an irregular component (I). This can be expressed as  $O = T * S * I$ . The contributions of each of these behaviours varies from series to series, as well as throughout time for a given series, depending on the nature of the interactions of real world events and the data of interest.

**30** Seasonal adjustment is a statistical technique that attempts to measure and remove the effects of systematic calendar related patterns including seasonal variation to reveal how a series changes from period to period. Seasonal adjustment does not aim to remove the irregular or non-seasonal influences which may be present in any particular month. This means that month-to-month movements of the seasonally adjusted estimates may not be reliable indicators of trend behaviour.

**31** The Labour Force Survey uses the concurrent seasonal adjustment method to derive seasonal factors. Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses data up to the current month to estimate seasonal factors for the current and all previous months. This process can result in revisions each month to estimates for earlier periods. However, in most instances, the only noticeable revisions will be to the seasonally adjusted estimates for the previous month and one year prior to the current month. From the March 2015 issue of this publication, the effects of supplementary surveys are removed prior to the estimation of seasonal factors for key Labour Force series from February 1978 onwards. While this methodology has addressed short term volatility in the seasonally adjusted series arising from changes to the timing and content of the supplementary survey program, in general prior corrections and resulting changed seasonal patterns can be identified and measured to a more reliable degree of certainty after three successive observations (in this case after three years). For further details refer to the October and December 2014 issues of this publication.

**32** The revision properties of the seasonally adjusted and trend estimates can be improved by the use of Autoregressive Integrated Moving Average (ARIMA) modelling. ARIMA modelling relies on the characteristics of the series being analysed to project future period data. The projected values are temporary, intermediate values, that are only used internally to improve the estimation of the seasonal factors. The projected data do not affect the original estimates and are discarded at the end of the seasonal adjustment process. The Labour Force Survey uses an ARIMA model for the majority of the individual time series. The ARIMA model is assessed as part of the annual reanalysis. For further details, see the feature article in the October 2004 issue of Australian Economic Indicators (cat. no. 1350.0).

**33** Seasonal adjustment is able to remove the effect of events which occur at the same time in the survey every year. However, there are some events, like holidays, which are not always at the same time in the survey cycle or which are not at the same time across Australia. The effects of these types of events on Labour Force Survey estimates cannot in all cases be removed, because the pattern of their effects cannot be determined. However, two events for which adjustment is made in the seasonally adjusted series are the January interview start date and the timing of Easter. For further details, see Information Paper: Forthcoming Changes to Labour Force Statistics (cat. no. 6292.0) released in December 2003.

**34** While seasonal factors for the complete time series are estimated each month, they will continue to be reviewed annually at a more detailed level to take into account each additional year's original data. This annual review will not normally result in significant changes to published estimates. The review is usually conducted early each year with the results released in this publication shortly thereafter.

**35** The smoothing of seasonally adjusted series to produce 'trend' series reduces the impact of the irregular component of the seasonally adjusted series. These trend estimates are derived by applying a 13-term Henderson-weighted moving average to all months except the last six. The last six monthly trend estimates are obtained by applying surrogates of the Henderson average to the seasonally adjusted series. Trend estimates are used to analyse the underlying behaviour of a series over time.

**36** While this smoothing technique enables estimates to be produced for the latest month, it does result in revisions in addition to those caused by the revision of seasonally adjusted estimates. Generally, revisions due to the use of surrogates of the Henderson average become smaller, and after three months have a negligible impact on the series.

**37** Trend estimates are published for the Northern Territory in table 10 and for the Australian Capital Territory in table 11. Unadjusted series for the two Territories have shown, historically, a high degree of variability, which can lead to considerable revisions to the seasonally adjusted estimates each month when seasonal factors are estimated. For this reason, seasonally adjusted estimates are not currently published for the two Territories. In addition, caution should be exercised in the interpretation of trend estimates for the two Territories, particularly for the three most recent months, where revisions may be relatively large.

**38** For further information, see A Guide to Interpreting Time Series - Monitoring Trends (cat. no. 1349.0).

## RELATED PUBLICATIONS

**39** Users may also wish to refer to the following publications and other data products that are available free of charge from the ABS website:

- Labour Force Survey Standard Products and Data Item Guide (cat. no. 6103.0)
- Labour Force, Australia, Detailed (cat. no. 6291.0.55.001)
- Labour Force, Australia, Detailed Quarterly (cat. no. 6291.0.55.003)
- Labour Force Survey Standard Errors, Data Cube (cat. no. 6298.0.55.001)
- Labour force, Australia - Rebenchmarked Estimates (cat. no. 6202.0.55.003)
- Labour Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods (cat. no. 6102.0.55.001)
- Australian Demographic Statistics (cat. no. 3101.0)
- Australian Labour Market Statistics (cat. no. 6105.0)
- Labour Force, Australia (cat. no. 6203.0)
- Information Paper: Outcomes of the Labour Household Surveys Content Review (cat. no. 6107.0)
- Information Paper: Questionnaires Used in the Labour Force Survey (cat. no. 6232.0)
- Information Paper: Regional Labour Force Statistics (cat. no. 6262.0)
- Information Paper: Labour Force Sample Design (cat. no. 6269.0)
- Information Paper: Forthcoming Changes to Labour Force Statistics (cat. no. 6292.0)
- Information Paper: Expansion of Hours Worked Estimates from the Labour Force Survey (cat. no. 6290.0.55.001)

**40** Current publications and other products released by the ABS are listed on the ABS website <https://www.abs.gov.au>. The ABS also issues a daily Release Advice on the website which details products to be released in the week ahead.

## DATA AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

**41** As well as the statistics included in this and related publications, the ABS may have other relevant data available. Inquiries should be made via email [client.services@abs.gov.au](mailto:client.services@abs.gov.au) or contact the National Information and Referral Service on 1300 135 070.

## EFFECTS OF ROUNDING

**42** Estimates have been rounded and discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and totals. Estimates of movement shown in this publication are obtained by taking the difference of unrounded estimates. The movement estimate is then rounded. Where a discrepancy occurs between the reported movement and the difference of the rounded estimates, the reported movement will be more accurate.

## SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

### 43 SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Symbol	Definition
'000	thousands
%	percentage
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
CAI	computer assisted interviewing
cat. no.	catalogue number

Civ. pop.	civilian population
ERP	estimated resident population
Emp. to pop. ratio	employment to population ratio
f/t	full time
LFS	Labour Force Survey
NILF	not in the Labour Force
Part. rate	participation rate
p/t	part time
pts	percentage points
Seas adj.	seasonally adjusted
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
Unemp. rate	unemployment rate

---

## Glossary

### GLOSSARY

#### Actively looked for work

Actively looked for work includes:

- written, telephoned or applied to an employer for work;
- had an interview with an employer for work;
- answered an advertisement for a job;
- checked or registered with an employment agency;
- taken steps to purchase or start your own business;
- advertised or tendered for work; and
- contacted friends or relatives in order to obtain work.

#### Actual hours of work

Actual hours of work refers to a specified reference period (e.g. a week) and includes:

- hours actually worked during normal periods of work;
- time spent in addition to hours worked during normal periods of work (including overtime);
- time spent at the place of work on activities such as the preparation of the workplace, repairs and maintenance, preparation and cleaning of tools, and the preparation of receipts, time sheets and reports;
- time spent at the place of work waiting or standing by due to machinery or process breakdown, accident, lack of supplies, power or internet access, etc;
- time corresponding to short rest periods (resting time) including tea and coffee breaks or prayer breaks;
- travel time connected to work (excluding commuting time); and
- training and skills enhancement related to the job or employer.

Excluded are:

- hours paid for but not worked, such as paid annual leave, public holidays or paid sick leave;
- meal breaks (e.g. lunch breaks);
- paid and unpaid time 'on call';
- time spent on travel to and from work when no productive activity for the job is performed (e.g. commuting time); and
- time off during working hours to attend outside educational activities, even if it is authorised, e.g. those not connected to the job or employer.

For multiple job holders the LFS collects a separate measure of actual hours worked in main job and in all jobs.

### **Attending full time education**

Persons aged 15-24 years enrolled at secondary or high school or enrolled as a full time student at a Technical and Further Education (TAFE) college, university, or other educational institution in the reference week.

### **Attending school**

Persons aged 15-19 years enrolled at secondary or high school in the reference week.

### **Attending tertiary educational institution full time**

Persons aged 15-24 years enrolled full time at a TAFE college, university, or other educational institution in the reference week, except those persons aged 15-19 years who were still attending school.

### **Civilian population aged 15 years and over**

All usual residents of Australia aged 15 years and over except members of the permanent defence forces, certain diplomatic personnel of overseas governments customarily excluded from census and estimated population counts, overseas residents in Australia, and members of non-Australian defence forces (and their dependants) stationed in Australia.

### **Composite Estimation**

The estimation methodology used in the Labour Force Survey. Composite Estimation uses sample responses from nearby months as well as from the reference month to derive estimates for the reference month. This approach achieves gains in efficiency by exploiting the high similarity between the responses provided by the same respondent in previous months. For details see Information Paper: Forthcoming Changes to Labour Force Statistics, 2007 (cat. no. 6292.0).

### **Employed**

All persons aged 15 years and over who met one of the following criteria during the reference week:

- Worked for one hour or more for pay, profit, commission or payment in kind, in a job or business or on a farm (employees and owner managers of incorporated or unincorporated enterprises).
- Worked for one hour or more without pay in a family business or on a farm (contributing family workers).
- Were employees who had a job but were not at work and were:
  - away from work for less than four weeks up to the end of the reference week; or
  - away from work for more than four weeks up to the end of the reference week and received pay for some or all of the four week period to the end of the reference week; or
  - away from work as a standard work or shift arrangement; or
  - on strike or locked out; or
  - on workers' compensation and expected to return to their job.
- Were owner managers who had a job, business or farm, but were not at work.

### **Employed full-time**

Includes employed persons who usually worked 35 hours or more a week (in all jobs) and those

who, although usually working less than 35 hours a week, worked 35 hours or more during the reference week.

### **Employed part-time**

Includes employed persons who usually worked less than 35 hours a week (in all jobs) and either did so during the reference week, or were not at work in the reference week.

### **Employment to population ratio**

For any group, the number of employed persons expressed as a percentage of the civilian population in the same group.

### **Estimated resident population (ERP)**

Estimated resident population (ERP), is Australia's official measure of the population of Australia and is based on the concept of usual residence. It refers to all people, regardless of nationality, citizenship or legal status, who usually live in Australia, with the exception of foreign diplomatic personnel and their families. It includes usual residents who are overseas for fewer than 12 months. It excludes overseas visitors who are in Australia for fewer than 12 months. Refer to Australian Demographic Statistics (cat. no. 3101.0).

### **Flow estimates**

Flow estimates are a measure of activity over a given period. For example, monthly hours worked in all jobs is a measure of the total number of hours worked in a calendar month.

### **Gross flows**

The matching of respondents who report in consecutive months enables analysis of the transition of individuals between the different labour force status classifications, referred to as the matched sample. The transition counts between the different labour force status classifications from one point in time to the next are commonly referred to as gross flows.

The figures presented in gross flows are presented in original terms only and do not align with published labour force estimates. The gross flows figures are derived from the matched sample between consecutive months, which after taking account of the sample rotation and varying non-response in each month is approximately 80 percent of the sample.

Caution should be exercised when analysing these gross flows data due to:

- the figures presented sum to approximately 80 percent of the population values as the gross flows data are based on the matched sample only;
- there is no adjustment applied to account for changes due to seasonal patterns (referred to commonly as seasonal adjustment); and
- the estimates of relative sizes of each transition class are subject to bias due to the matched sample being a non-representative sample.

### **Labour force**

For any group, persons who were employed or unemployed, as defined.

### **Labour force status**

A classification of the civilian population aged 15 years and over into employed, unemployed or not in the labour force, as defined. The definitions conform closely to the international standard definitions adopted by the International Conferences of Labour Statisticians.

## **Long-term unemployed**

The number of persons unemployed for 52 weeks or over.

## **Long-term unemployment ratio**

The number of long-term unemployed persons, expressed as a percentage of the total unemployed population.

## **Market sector**

The market sector is an industry grouping comprising the following industries: Agriculture, forestry and fishing; Mining; Manufacturing; Electricity, gas, water and waste services; Construction; Wholesale trade; Retail trade; Accommodation and food services; Transport, postal and warehousing; Information media and telecommunications; Finance and insurance services; Rental, hiring and real estate services; Professional, scientific and technical services; Administrative and support services; Arts and recreation services; and Other services. Refer to Australian System of National Accounts: Concepts, Sources and Methods (cat. no. 5216.0).

## **Non-market Sector**

The non-market sector is an industry grouping comprising the following industries: Education and training; Public administration & safety; and Health care and social assistance. Refer to Australian System of National Accounts: Concepts, Sources and Methods (cat. no. 5216.0)

## **Monthly hours worked in all jobs**

Monthly hours worked in all jobs measures the total number of actual hours worked by employed persons in a calendar month. It differs from the actual hours worked estimates (and the usual hours worked estimates) since these refer only to the hours worked in the reference week.

The methodology used to produce monthly hours worked in all jobs means that these are synthetic estimates. Seasonally adjusted and trend estimates of monthly hours worked in all jobs are available for the period July 1978 onwards.

Further information on the methodology used to produce the monthly hours worked in all jobs estimates is available on the ABS website in Information Paper: Expansion of Hours Worked Estimates from the Labour Force Survey (cat. no. 6290.0.55.001).

Actual and usual hours worked cannot be aggregated across time to produce either quarterly or annual estimates as they relate to only a single week in the month. In contrast, monthly hours worked in all jobs estimates are a true monthly measure, and may be aggregated across time to produce both quarterly and annual estimates.

## **Not in labour force**

Persons who were not in the categories employed or unemployed, as defined. They include people who undertook unpaid household duties or other voluntary work only, were retired, voluntarily inactive and those permanently unable to work.

## **Participation rate**

For any group, the labour force expressed as a percentage of the civilian population aged 15 years and over in the same group.

## **Response rate**

The number of fully responding dwellings expressed as a percentage of the total number of dwellings excluding sample loss. Examples of sample loss include: dwellings where all persons are



out of scope and/or coverage; vacant dwellings; dwellings under construction; dwellings converted to non-dwellings; derelict dwellings; and demolished dwellings.

### **Seasonally adjusted series**

A time series of estimates with the estimated effects of normal seasonal variation removed. See Explanatory Notes for more detail.

### **Stock estimates**

Stock estimates are a measure of certain attributes at a point in time and can be thought of as stocktakes. For example, the total number of employed persons is an account of the number of people who were considered employed in the Labour Force Survey reference week.

### **Trend series**

A smoothed seasonally adjusted series of estimates. See Explanatory Notes for more detail.

### **Underemployment rate (proportion of labour force)**

The number of underemployed workers expressed as a percentage of the labour force.

### **Underemployment ratio (proportion of employed)**

The number of underemployed workers expressed as a percentage of total employed persons.

### **Underemployed workers**

Employed persons aged 15 years and over who want, and are available for, more hours of work than they currently have. They comprise:

- persons employed part time who want to work more hours and are available to start work with more hours, either in the reference week or in the four weeks subsequent to the survey; or
- persons employed full time who worked part time hours in the reference week for economic reasons (such as being stood down or insufficient work being available). It is assumed that these people wanted to work full time in the reference week and would have been available to do so.

### **Underutilisation rate**

The sum of the number of persons unemployed and the number of persons in underemployment, expressed as a proportion of the labour force.

### **Unemployed**

Persons aged 15 years and over who were not employed during the reference week, and:

- had actively looked for full time or part time work at any time in the four weeks up to the end of the reference week and were available for work in the reference week; or
- were waiting to start a new job within four weeks from the end of the reference week and could have started in the reference week if the job had been available then.

### **Unemployed looked for full time work**

Unemployed persons who:

- actively looked for full time work; or

- were waiting to start a new full time job.

### **Unemployed looked for only part time work**

Unemployed persons who:

- actively looked for part time work only; or
- were waiting to start a new part time job.

### **Unemployment rate**

For any group, the number of unemployed persons expressed as a percentage of the labour force in the same group.

### **Usual hours of work**

Usual hours of work refers to a typical period rather than the hours worked in a specified reference period. The concept of usual hours applies both to persons at work and to persons temporarily absent from work, and is defined as the hours worked during a typical week or day. Actual hours worked (for a specific reference period) may differ from usual hours worked due to illness, vacation, strike, overtime work, a change of job, or similar reasons.

## **Data Cubes (I-Note) - Data Cubes**

The simultaneous introduction of two rotation groups per month between May and August 2013 resulted in a lower proportion of the sample being matched during this period. In June 2013, a new sample for the more remote, less populated areas and non-private dwellings was introduced for Tasmania, Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory. The new sample for the same categories in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia was introduced in July 2013. These changes are reflected in smaller estimates in the gross flows.

## **Standard Errors**

## STANDARD ERRORS

The estimates in this publication are based on information gained from the occupants of a sample survey of dwellings. Because the entire population is not surveyed, the published original, seasonally adjusted and trend estimates are subject to sampling error. The most common way of quantifying such sampling error is to calculate the standard error for the published estimate or statistic. For more information, see paragraphs 26 to 28 of the Explanatory Notes.

## LEVEL ESTIMATES

To illustrate, let us say the published level estimate for employed persons aged 15-19 years is 700,000 and the associated standard error is 9,000. The standard error is then used to interpret the level estimate of 700,000. For instance, the standard error of 9,000 indicates that:

- There are approximately two chances in three that the real value falls within the range 691,000 to 709,000 (700,000 + or - 9,000).
- There are approximately nineteen chances in twenty that the real value falls within the range 682,000 to 718,000 (700,000 + or - 18,000).

The real value in this case is the result we would obtain if we could enumerate the total population.

The following table shows the standard errors for this month's level estimates.

		NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	AUSTRALIA		
										Males	Females	Persons
<b>Aged 15 years and over</b>												
Employed												
Full time	('000)	26.3	19.8	17.6	7.5	11.2	2.9	2.2	2.9	32.7	24.7	39.7
Part time	('000)	19.8	13.3	12.5	5.9	8.4	2.4	0.9	2.1	14.9	22.7	28.3
Total	('000)	28.9	24.3	20.4	8.8	12.4	3.5	2.7	3.0	36.0	34.1	45.1
Unemployed												
Looking for f/t work	('000)	8.5	7.1	8.6	3.0	4.8	1.2	0.8	0.9	11.7	9.5	15.2
Looking for p/t work	('000)	5.7	5.0	5.1	2.1	3.1	0.7	0.3	0.8	6.0	7.7	9.9
Total	('000)	10.4	8.8	9.5	3.5	5.7	1.4	0.9	1.2	13.2	12.4	18.3
Labour force	('000)	29.1	24.9	20.8	9.0	12.6	3.5	2.8	3.1	36.8	34.9	45.7
Not in labour force	('000)	24.2	21.7	22.8	8.2	11.9	3.6	3.4	3.2	31.4	35.9	42.4
Unemployment rate												
Looking for f/t work	pts	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.8	0.5	0.2	0.3	0.2
Looking for p/t work	pts	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.8	1.1	0.4	0.3	0.2
Total	pts	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.7	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.1
Participation rate	pts	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.8	1.5	0.9	0.4	0.3	0.2
<b>Aged 15-19 years</b>												
Employed												
Full time	('000)	3.9	2.2	2.7	1.0	1.5	0.4	0.2	0.5	4.8	3.8	5.6
Part time	('000)	6.1	3.6	4.3	1.8	2.5	0.7	0.2	0.7	6.5	7.3	9.4
Total	('000)	7.0	4.1	5.0	2.0	2.8	0.8	0.2	0.8	7.6	7.8	10.7
Unemployed												
Looking for f/t work	('000)	2.7	2.1	3.3	1.0	1.6	0.4	0.3	0.4	4.1	3.2	5.2
Looking for p/t work	('000)	3.2	2.5	3.2	1.2	2.2	0.3	0.2	0.5	3.9	4.4	5.9
Total	('000)	4.3	3.3	4.8	1.6	2.7	0.5	0.3	0.7	5.7	5.4	7.9
Labour force	('000)	7.6	4.5	5.7	2.2	3.3	0.9	0.3	0.9	8.3	8.4	11.7
Not in labour force	('000)	9.2	6.1	7.5	2.9	4.1	1.1	0.8	1.3	10.5	9.7	14.7
Unemployment rate												
Looking for f/t work	pts	3.7	4.2	5.3	7.1	7.4	8.1	9.0	10.2	2.7	3.9	2.2
Looking for p/t work	pts	1.7	1.7	2.3	2.7	3.1	2.5	3.7	5.3	1.5	1.2	0.9
Total	pts	1.6	1.7	2.4	2.8	3.0	2.8	4.4	4.8	1.3	1.3	0.9
Participation rate	pts	1.6	1.2	1.8	2.1	2.1	2.9	1.8	3.6	1.1	1.2	0.8
Unemployment to population ratio - looking for f/t work	pts	0.6	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.7	1.6	0.5	0.4	0.3

## MOVEMENT ESTIMATES

The following example illustrates how to use the standard error to interpret a movement estimate. Let us say that one month the published level estimate for females employed part-time in Australia is 1,890,000; the next month the published level estimate is 1,900,000 and the associated standard error for the movement estimate is 11,900. The standard error is then used to interpret the published movement estimate of 10,000. For instance, the standard error of 11,900 indicates that:

- There are approximately two chances in three that the real movement between the two months falls within the range - 1,900 to 21,900 (10,000 + or - 11,900).
- There are approximately nineteen chances in twenty that the real movement falls within the range - 13,800 to 33,800 (10,000 + or - 23,800).

The following table shows the standard errors for this month's movement estimates.

AUSTRALIA												
NSW Vic. Qld SA WA Tas. NT ACT												
Males Females Persons												
Aged 15 years and over												
Employed												
Full time	('000)	15.7	13.0	9.7	4.0	6.6	1.7	1.8	1.9	19.0	14.5	24.5
Part time	('000)	10.5	9.0	6.2	3.0	4.4	1.4	1.0	1.2	9.3	13.4	16.4
Total	('000)	19.2	16.1	13.6	5.9	8.6	2.3	2.0	2.2	21.4	20.0	30.6
Unemployed												
Looking for f/t work	('000)	8.7	7.4	8.1	3.2	5.1	1.1	0.8	1.1	11.6	9.9	15.3
Looking for p/t work	('000)	5.8	5.4	4.4	2.1	3.3	0.8	0.4	1.1	6.4	7.7	10.1
Total	('000)	10.6	9.2	9.4	3.9	6.0	1.4	0.9	1.4	13.2	12.7	18.5
Labour force	('000)	19.7	16.5	14.6	6.3	9.1	2.4	2.0	2.3	22.0	20.6	31.5
Not in labour force	('000)	18.0	15.7	14.2	5.8	8.7	2.2	2.1	2.5	18.4	22.1	29.9
Unemployment rate												
Looking for f/t work	pts	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.8	0.6	0.2	0.3	0.2
Looking for p/t work	pts	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.8	1.1	1.3	0.5	0.3	0.2
Total	pts	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.2	0.2	0.1
Participation rate	pts	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	1.1	0.7	0.2	0.2	0.2
Aged 15-19 years												
Employed												
Full time	('000)	2.6	2.1	1.8	0.8	1.1	0.3	0.3	0.3	3.5	2.7	4.0
Part time	('000)	4.1	3.3	2.7	1.3	1.8	0.5	0.4	0.5	4.4	4.9	6.2
Total	('000)	4.6	3.7	3.1	1.4	2.1	0.6	0.5	0.6	5.2	5.3	7.0
Unemployed												
Looking for f/t work	('000)	2.8	2.2	3.0	1.1	1.8	0.4	0.3	0.4	4.1	3.4	5.2
Looking for p/t work	('000)	3.3	3.2	2.9	1.4	2.3	0.4	0.1	0.6	4.4	4.4	6.1
Total	('000)	4.4	3.9	4.2	1.8	2.9	0.6	0.3	0.8	5.8	5.5	8.0
Labour force	('000)	4.9	4.1	3.4	1.5	2.2	0.6	0.5	0.6	5.6	5.6	7.5
Not in labour force	('000)	5.8	5.0	3.7	1.8	2.7	0.7	0.9	0.7	6.9	6.4	9.0
Unemployment rate												
Looking for f/t work	pts	4.0	4.4	5.7	7.4	7.8	9.5	8.5	11.0	2.8	4.4	2.4
Looking for p/t work	pts	1.8	2.0	2.4	3.1	3.2	3.0	3.6	5.7	1.6	1.3	1.0
Total	pts	1.7	1.9	2.5	3.1	3.1	3.2	4.3	5.1	1.4	1.3	1.0
Participation rate	pts	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.5	1.5	2.0	3.2	2.5	0.7	0.8	0.5
Unemployment to population ratio - looking for f/t work												
	pts	0.6	0.6	0.9	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.7	1.8	0.5	0.5	0.3

## Quality Declaration - Summary

### QUALITY DECLARATION - SUMMARY

#### INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Labour Force statistics are compiled from the Labour Force Survey which is conducted each month throughout Australia as part of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) household survey program. For information on the institutional environment of the Australian Bureau of Statistics

(ABS), including the legislative obligations of the ABS, financing and governance arrangements, and mechanisms for scrutiny of ABS operations, please see ABS Institutional Environment.

## **RELEVANCE**

The Labour Force Survey provides monthly information about the labour market activity of Australia's resident civilian population aged 15 years and over. The Labour Force Survey is designed to primarily provide estimates of employment and unemployment for the whole of Australia and, secondarily, for each state and territory.

## **TIMELINESS**

The Labour Force Survey enumeration begins on the Sunday between the 5th and 11th of the month, except for the Christmas and New Year holiday period. In December enumeration starts between the 3rd and 9th (4 weeks after November enumeration begins). In January enumeration starts between the 7th and 13th (5 weeks after December enumeration begins).

Key estimates from the Labour Force Survey are published in two stages. The first, Labour Force, Australia (cat. no. 6202.0), is released 39 days after the commencement of enumeration for the month, with the exception of estimates for December which are published 46 days after the commencement of enumeration.

The second stage includes detailed data that were not part of the first stage and are published in Labour Force, Australia, Detailed - Electronic Delivery (cat. no. 6291.0.55.001) and Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, Quarterly (cat. no. 6291.0.55.003). The second stage is released 7 days after the first stage.

## **ACCURACY**

The Labour Force Survey is based on a sample of private dwellings (approximately 26,000 houses, flats etc) and non-private dwellings, such as hotels and motels. The sample covers about 0.32% of the Australian civilian population aged 15 years or over. The Labour Force Survey is designed primarily to provide estimates of key labour force statistics for the whole of Australia and, secondarily, for each state and territory.

Two types of error are possible in an estimate based on a sample survey: non-sampling error and sampling error.

Non-sampling error arises from inaccuracies in collecting, recording and processing the data. Every effort is made to minimise reporting error by the careful design of questionnaires, intensive training and supervision of interviewers, and efficient data processing procedures. Non-sampling error also arises because information cannot be obtained from all persons selected in the survey. The Australian Labour Force Survey receives a higher level of co-operation from individuals in selected dwellings compared to other countries, with the average response rate over the past 3 years being 92.0 per cent, and the average rate over the past year being 91.5 per cent (to the nearest quarter of a per cent, in rounded terms). See Glossary for definition of response rate.

Sampling error occurs because a sample, rather than the entire population, is surveyed. One measure of the likely difference resulting from not including all dwellings in the survey is given by the standard error. There are about two chances in three that a sample estimate will differ by less than one standard error from the figure that would have been obtained if all dwellings had been included in the survey, and about nineteen chances in twenty that the difference will be less than two standard errors.

Standard errors of key estimates and movements since the previous month are available in Labour

Force, Australia (cat. no. 6202.0). The standard error of other estimates and movements may be calculated by using the spreadsheet contained in Labour Force Survey Standard Errors, Data Cube (cat. no. 6298.0.55.001).

## **COHERENCE**

The ABS has been conducting the Labour Force Survey each month since February 1978. While seeking to provide a high degree of consistency and comparability over time by minimising changes to the survey, sound survey practice requires careful and continuing maintenance and development to maintain the integrity of the data and the efficiency of the collection.

The changes which have been made to the Labour Force Survey have included changes in sampling methods, estimation methods, concepts, data item definitions, classifications, and time series analysis techniques. In introducing these changes the ABS has generally revised previous estimates to ensure consistency and coherence with current estimates. For a full list of changes made to the Labour Force Survey see Chapter 20 in Labour Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods (cat. no. 6102.0.55.001).

## **INTERPRETABILITY**

The key estimates from the Labour Force Survey are available as original, seasonally adjusted and trend series. Seasonal adjustment is a means of removing the effects of normal seasonal variation from the series so other influences on the series can be more clearly recognised. Seasonal adjustment does not aim to remove the irregular influences which may be present and therefore month-to-month movements may not be reliable indicators of underlying behaviour. To assist in interpreting the underlying behaviour, the ABS produces the trend series by smoothing the seasonally adjusted series to reduce the impact of the irregular component. For further information, see A Guide to Interpreting Time Series - Monitoring Trends (cat. no. 1349.0).

Further information on the terminology and other technical aspects associated with statistics from the Labour Force Survey can be found in the publication Labour Force, Australia (cat. no. 6202.0), which contains detailed Explanatory Notes, Standard Error information and a Glossary.

## **ACCESSIBILITY**

Please see the Related Information tab for the list of products that are available from this collection.